

REMARKS

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Formal Matters

Claims 1, 3-12, 14-17, and 25-30 are pending.

The prior formal rejections have been withdrawn.

Substantive Rejections

Claims 1, 3-12, 14-17, and 25-30 were rejected as obvious over SETOGAWA, EP 0898279 in view of SUGIMURA 2004/0252974.

Applicants attach a verified English-language translation of the Japanese priority application to perfect applicants' claim of priority to the Japanese priority application date of July 1, 2003.

SUGIMURA has a U.S. filing date of September 22, 2003 which is subsequent to applicants' priority date of July 1, 2003. Therefore, SUGIMURA is not prior art to the present application.

Withdrawal of the obviousness rejection and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Having addressed all of the issues raised in the Official Action, the present response is believed to be fully responsive.

Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

Should there be any remaining outstanding issues, applicants would appreciate that the undersigned attorney be telephonically contacted so that these issues can be resolved and the case be passed to allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX:

The Appendix includes the following item(s):

- a verified English translation of foreign priority document